

PUBLIC

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26 July 2006

UA 202/06      Fear for safety/threats

MEXICO      Manuel Gómez Hernández (m), human rights defender

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Manuel Gómez Hernandez has been threatened, allegedly by a judge from the municipality of Zinacantán, in an apparent attempt to stop him carrying out his legitimate and peaceful activities as a human rights defender. Amnesty International fears that he may be in danger.

Manuel Gómez Hernandez, a member of the Tsotsil indigenous group, works for the human rights organization *Centro de derechos humanos Fray Bartolome de las Casas* in the town of San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas state. His work involves advising people who come to the organization seeking help on human rights concerns.

According to reports, at about 9pm on 17 July, Manuel Gómez Hernandez was at his house in San Cristóbal de las Casas, when he received a telephone call from a man who told him: "Manuel, I warn you. Don't be involved in the problem of Zinacantán. This is a family issue. If you intervene on this you will suffer the consequences." (*Manuel, te anticipo que no te metas en el problema de Zinacantán, ese problema es familiar, si tu te metes te llevará la "chingada"*). When Manuel Gómez Hernandez replied that he didn't know what he was talking about, the caller reportedly threatened him, saying, "We know that you are working there, if we want we can get you anytime, so be careful" (*sabemos que eres representante de allí, cuando queramos chingarte es fácil, cuídate*). Before hanging up the telephone, the caller allegedly told Manuel Gómez Hernandez that his name was "Germán" and that he was a judge in the municipality of Zinacantán.

This threat may be linked to Manuel Gómez Hernandez's work for the *Centro de derechos humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas* on a case in Zinacantán. In the past he has been intimidated and physically attacked as a result of his human rights work.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights defenders have frequently been the target of threats, harassment and smear campaigns, particularly from the state and municipal authorities. Those responsible are rarely identified or brought to justice, principally because official investigations are ineffective. The Mexican authorities also often fail to demonstrate that they are committed to supporting the legitimate work of human rights defenders in the country.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Manuel Gomez Hernandez following a reports that he received a threatening phone call on 17 July, allegedly from a municipal judge from Zinacantán;
- calling for a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into phone call, for the findings to be made public and for the person or people responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Manuel Gómez Hernandez does not suffer any further intimidation as a result of his work as a human rights defender;
- calling for guarantees that he will receive protection in accordance with his own wishes;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

**APPEALS TO:**

Governor of Chiapas

Lic. Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía  
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas,  
Palacio de Gobierno, Piso 1, Col. Centro 29000, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico.  
**Fax: + 52 961 61 209 17/ 256 18 (if someone answers, ask “tono de fax, por favor”)**  
**Email: [secpart@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:secpart@prodigy.net.mx)**  
**Salutation: Estimado Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor**

Attorney General of Chiapas

Lic. Mariano Herrán Salvatti  
Fiscal General de Justicia del Estado de Chiapas  
Libramiento Norte s/n, tercer nivel, Colonia Infonavit “El Rosario”, CP 30064  
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, México  
**Fax: + 52 961 61 657 24**  
**Email: [fiscaliachiapas@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:fiscaliachiapas@prodigy.net.mx)**  
**Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear Attorney General**

President of the State Human Rights Commission

Lic. Yesmin Lima Adam  
Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos,  
Boulevard Comitan 143 Col. Moctezuma,  
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico  
**Fax: + 52 961 6025784 (if someone answers, ask “tono de fax, por favor”)**  
**Email: [cdh@cdh-chiapas.org.mx](mailto:cdh@cdh-chiapas.org.mx)**  
**Salutation: Estimada Licenciada/ Dear Madam**

**COPIES TO:**

Human rights organization

Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas A.C  
Brasil No. 14 Barrio Mexicanos, CP. 29240, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico

and to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 September 2006.